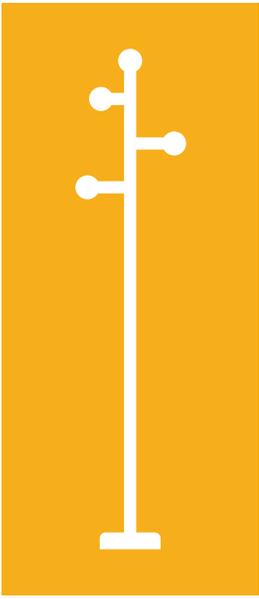
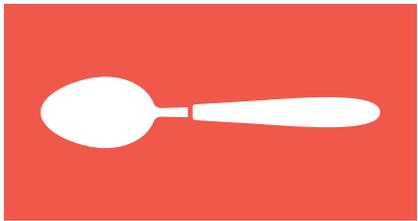
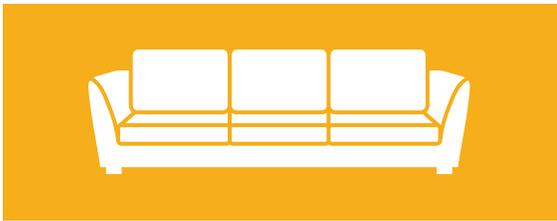


*loving others through  
Christ-like hospitality*

# INITIATE

## CONFERENCE 2019

### CONFERENCE OVERVIEW & THEME



# INITIATE CONFERENCE - DEFINED



## GLORY OF GOD

The glory of God is a significant theme in scripture. God's glory can be thought of as His fame, worth, or excellence. In verb form, to glorify God is to bring honor to God by displaying His worth and excellence through how one lives. To worship God is to bring glory to God, and to glorify God is to worship Him. The Apostle Paul wrote, 1 Corinthians 10:31: "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." So, in effect, we are to worship God in everything we do no matter how mundane it may be.

This is also true of discipleship and ministry. The very aim of our discipleship is "that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God" (2 Cor. 4:15). The ministry we do to, and with, one another is ultimately for the glory of God and the good of our neighbor. For example, Paul writes, "welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God" (Rom. 15:7).

## LOVE & SERVE

God calls His people to be distinct from the world. The most distinguishing mark of the Christian is the love that they show in their service to others—both in the church and outside of the church, but to those in the church especially (Jn. 13:34-35; Rom. 12:9-13; Gal. 5:13). Christians cannot say that they love others while neglecting to serve those around them (1 Jn. 3:16-18; Jas. 2:15-16). So, serving others through love for the glory of God is the distinguishing mark of disciples and we are to grow in this pursuit.



## GOSPEL-CENTERED THEOLOGY & PRACTICE

Gospel-centered theology is fundamentally about Jesus. He is understood as the fulfillment of God's precious and great promises (2 Cor. 1:20), the Messiah and Savior (2 Pet. 3:18), the hope of every Christian (Eph. 1:12). Jesus is to have supremacy in everything (Col. 1:18) because he is the Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer, Alpha, Omega, and glorious King.

Gospel-centered practice, or living, is also fundamentally about Jesus. Joe Thorn defines it as: "The gospel-centered life is a life where a Christian experiences a growing personal reliance on the gospel that protects him from depending on his own religious performance and being seduced and overwhelmed by idols." In a nutshell, gospel-centered living understands the gospel as both the motive and the power to pursue Christ-likeness and puts no confidence in the flesh (Phil. 3:3-4).



# 2019 CONFERENCE OVERVIEW



## HOSPITALITY IN SCRIPTURE:

### ROMANS 12:13

*Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.*

### 1 THESS. 2:8

*So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.*

### ROMANS 15:17

*Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.*

### TITLE:

Initiate: loving others through Christ-like hospitality

### DESCRIPTION:

The words of the gospel are necessary and life giving. But hospitality gives those words context and makes plain the beauty and weightiness of the gospel. Christians are called to be hospitable (Rom. 12:13). And the call to hospitality flows from the reality of God's hospitable character in which He created a world and filled it with everything we need. God also rescues sinners through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, redeeming fallen people by adopting them as children and welcoming them into His family. So the very heart of the gospel and its implications is God's radical hospitality.

The Initiate Conference is designed to train church leaders by equipping them with gospel-centered theology and practice to love and serve others for the glory of God. This year's theme aims to help our leaders connect the gospel to how we love and serve others through practicing ordinary hospitality. We'll spend time learning what gospel-centered hospitality is, how we see it modeled in scripture, and how we can practice it in our life and ministry. It's important that we are eager to share the gospel with our words, but it is also important that we are willing to share our lives as well (1 Thess. 2:8).

### DEFINITION OF HOSPITALITY:

Generously leveraging our resources in loving service to others for the glory of God.

### WHO IS THE CONFERENCE FOR?

The Initiate Conference is designed to train church leaders by equipping them with gospel-centered theology and practice to love and serve others for the glory of God.

# WHO ARE THE CHURCH LEADERS?

## LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH

A biblical understanding of church leadership properly identifies the Pastors, Elders, and Overseers as the church's leaders. Those three titles are interchangeable and refer to the same office. The terms Overseer and Pastor rightly highlight the function of what it means to have that particular office. However, there are also others in the church who are not identified as Elder/Pastors/Overseers who exhibit and exercise leadership in the church. For instance, Priscilla (Prisca) and Aquila were influential in the early days of the church (Acts 18; Rom. 16:3; 1 Cor. 16:19) in their teaching and discipleship of Apollos, and also the fact that the church met in their home. So, not every leader in the church is Pastor/Elder; there are some people who exercise leadership and are encouraged to do so with zeal (Rom. 12:8).

At the 2018 Initiate Conference, a definition of leadership was offered as: taking initiative for the glory of God and the good of others. Leadership, basically, is taking a person from "here" to "there"—whatever "here" and "there" means. For instance, helping someone go from no knowledge of the bible to reading the bible takes leadership. That person is being brought from ignorance to knowledge.

Using this definition helps us better understand what it meant by Christian leadership. **Christian leadership is taking the initiative to do spiritual good to others with the aim of ultimately glorifying God through what is done.** This kind of leadership is also an aspect of discipleship. For no disciple is ever permitted to not pursue the good of others and to do all things for the glory of God. So, every disciple is called to some form of leadership; every disciple is called to take initiative to do spiritual good to others for the glory of God.

**Christian leadership is taking the initiative to do spiritual good to others with the aim of ultimately glorifying God through what is done.**



# WHO ARE THE CHURCH LEADERS?

Formally speaking, therefore, church leaders are those who are authorized to exercise oversight of the church through ruling and teaching in the office called Elder/Pastor. However, leadership is also a spiritual gift (Rom. 12:8) that some Christians will have while others will not. But that does not mean leadership is only for Pastors/Elders, or those who are gifted by the Spirit to lead. In fact, there are many disciples in the church who are serving in a particular ministry or holding a particular ministry position (i.e., small group leader, KIDS ministry teacher, Usher or Greeter) that are neither Elder/Pastors nor do they possess the spiritual gift of leadership, but lead nonetheless. These disciples are serving others by leading them from “point A” to “point B” for the good of those they serve and for the glory of God.

Although not every Christian will be an Elder/Pastor, nor will every Christian have the spiritual gift of leadership, every Christian is indwelled by the Holy Spirit and “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” (1 Corinthians 12:7). The Apostle Peter summarizes it like this: “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace...in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 4:10-11). Every Christian is to use every spiritual gift to serve one another for the glory of God. But **every Christian must take the initiative to do so.**

Since leadership is taking the initiative for the glory of God and good of others, and is a vital aspect of discipleship, every disciple is called to some form of leadership. The Initiate Conference is designed to train volunteer church leaders (i.e., Small Group Leaders, Sunday School Teachers, Greeters, Ushers, Prayer Room Workers, Musicians, etc.) by equipping them with gospel-centered theology and practice to love and serve others for the glory of God.

**CONTINUED...**

## **1 COR 12:7**

*To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good*

## **1 PETER 4:10-11**

*As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace...in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ*

